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noteworthy even than his sallies of wit or his slashing retorts—the remark that “half-truths are simple, but the whole truth is the most complicated thing on earth.” Other essays follow, less important in theme, but not less entertaining in manner. Mr. Lodge writes of the origin of certain Americanisms with more spirit and point than writers usually bring to such a theme, quoting from classic English authors sentences almost unbelievably redolent of the so-called American idiom. It is on the whole a pleasant surprise, if something of a shock even to our own preconceived notions, to learn that Carlyle once wrote: “He has brought you a Fox’s *Book of Martyrs*, which I *calculate* will go in the parcel to-day; you will get *right good* reading out of it, I *guess*.” In another essay, the author amusingly traces the subtle process by which an utterly baseless legend, relating a dramatic action said to have been performed by Aaron Burr (or in one version by Alexander Hamilton) in the course of a noted murder trial, came to be accepted as sober historic truth. The concluding piece, entitled “The Diversions of a Convalescent,” is full of that serene and deep delight in good literature which is seldom felt at its highest and is still more rarely communicated in all its freshness of rediscovery.

GERMANY EMBATTLED—AN AMERICAN INTERPRETATION. By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915.

The opening chapters of Mr. Villard’s book not only state the German point of view with fairness, but convey a strong and convincing impression of the feeling and spirit of the mass of the German people. This impression lasts through the book, and remains dominant in the reader’s mind after the book has been laid aside. One is made to appreciate “the thrill and the uplift born of whole-souled devotion” which “wrenched the populace loose from the purely personal considerations of life and stirred them with all the enthusiasm of readiness to die in a common cause.” “Even the foreign spectators,” writes the author, “caught up in the sudden swirl of vast, loosened reservoirs of national feeling, found it impossible to observe save with awe, and conviction, and deep emotion, this profoundly impressive transformation of a people.” One is made to understand, too, how thoroughly the German people believe that they are in the right, and how entirely natural, how inevitable it is that they should believe this. In fact, among the writings about the war that have appeared in the periodical press or in book form there has been hardly anything that gives such a realization of the moral grandeur of Germany’s great struggle, seen through German eyes, as does this comparatively simple and concise discourse of Mr. Villard’s. The effect upon the reader is both thrilling and disheartening—disheartening because it makes the moral tragedy of the great war seem all the darker.

There are, indeed, two Germanys. Repeatedly in recent years able writers have urged us to distinguish between what is German and

what is Prussian; between the traditional spirit of the nation, somewhat obscured, perhaps, yet by no means extinct, and the modern spirit of force-worship. Mr. Villard draws the distinction afresh. There is on the one hand the Germany of the *Junker* and their allies, of the reactionaries and militarists, and on the other there is "the Germany of great souls, with its thinkers, its teachers, its civic administrators, its poets, its glorious musicians, its philosophers, and its idealists." Out of the two has been wrought the present conception of German *Kultur*. That the two elements of this conception bear to each other no necessary relation, that they are actually in the last analysis incompatible, would seem plain enough from an American point of view. Mr. Villard suggests that the welding of the two may be merely temporary, and perhaps he is right; yet it is difficult even for the American born to derive much encouragement from the thought. It is still harder to follow the author, with a faith in the abstract ethical appeal equal to his own, in his exhortations to German-Americans. "However difficult it may be," he writes, "the German-American must think out for himself what is going to be best for Germany in the long run, and ask whether victory by force of arms would not injure the ideal he holds for the Fatherland far more than would a chastening defeat." This is doubtless good ethics and sound philosophy, yet it is in passages such as this that the appeal of Mr. Villard's book appears least effective. Loyalty to their adopted country it seems reasonable to expect from German-Americans, but that they should look forward with complacency to a chastening defeat for the Fatherland—that is much to require of weak human nature. Indeed, such utterances may even be a little depressing, inevitably reminding us as they do of the tragic difference that may lie between the ethics of patriotism and the ethics of a broader humanity.

Mr. Villard does, however, clearly define the prevailing American attitude—and that is much. Stripping away all misunderstandings and exaggerations, he makes plain the real, the fundamental, objections of Americans to Germany's course, as well as the reasons for the failure in this country of the assiduously circulated German self-justifications. The book is high-minded; it is truthful; it is worthy of America. So justly, and in the main so tactfully, has the author expressed his message, that his treatise may well stand before the world as perhaps the clearest and most succinct expression of the American attitude. And yet through its very candor, its very optimism, this able little work brings home to us the difficulty of saying anything helpful or reassuring about the great conflict of nations.

A RUSSIAN COMEDY OF ERRORS. By GEORGE KENNAN. New York: The Century Company, 1915.

Some of the tales which George Kennan has told in *A Russian Comedy of Errors* are evidently faithful records of true occurrences;